



## Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) Program INDICATORS TO BE MONITORED IN 2005

The park's VERP program safeguards the quality of both park resources and the visitor experience. Simply put, VERP in Yosemite serves as a report card to measure how well the park is protecting and enhancing the Merced River's unique values. The Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS presents a set of revised indicators and standards to quantitatively monitor and maintain environmental and social conditions in the Merced River corridor. These prescriptions—coupled with a monitoring program—will give park managers the information and rationale needed to make sound, science-based decisions about the impacts associated with visitor use.

Below is a list of the indicators being monitored in 2005. For a description of the zoning prescriptions and a map of where they are located in the river corridor, please consult the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan*.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHER PARTIES ALONG TRAILS IN WILDERNESS</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>1A Untrailed, 1B Trailed Travel</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	
Zone 1A	No more than one encounter with another party per four hour period 80% of the time.
Zone 1B	No more than six encounters with another party per hour 80% of the time.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT ONE TIME (PAOT) ALONG TRAILS</b>
<b>ZONE:</b>	<b>1C Heavy Use Trail</b>
<b>STANDARD:</b>	Not more than 20 people on a 50-meter section of the trail at any one time, 80% of the time.

***NOTE:*** This indicator was not monitored in 2005 due to scheduled trail maintenance and subsequent closures on Half Dome. Monitoring will resume in the 2006 field season.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>WILDLIFE EXPOSURE TO HUMAN FOOD</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3A Camping, 3B Visitor Base and Lodging</b>
<b>STANDARD:</b>	95% or greater compliance with food storage regulations in selected campgrounds and parking areas.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PEOPLE AT ONE TIME (PAOT) ALONG THE RIVER</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>1C Heavy Use Trail, 2A Open Space, 2A+ Undeveloped Open Space, 2B Discovery, 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction</b>
<b>STANDARD:</b>	No net increase from 2005 baseline of number of people in River Protection Overlay at selected sites.

<b>INDICATOR:</b>	<b>NUMBER OF INFORMAL (SOCIAL) TRAILS</b>
<b>ZONES:</b>	<b>2A Open Space, 2A+ Undeveloped Open Space</b>
<b>STANDARDS:</b>	No net increase in number from 2004 baselines. No social trails for wetland features.

**INDICATOR:** LENGTH OF INFORMAL (SOCIAL) TRAILS IN MEADOWS  
**ZONES:** 2B Discovery, 2C Day Use  
**STANDARD:** No net increase in length from 2004 baseline.

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**INDICATOR:** RIVER BANK EROSION  
**ZONES:** 2B Discovery, 2C Day Use  
**STANDARD:** No net increase over 2005 baseline in linear extent of river bank erosion. Inventory to be conducted this year will establish baseline data from which to establish appropriate standards of quality.

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**INDICATOR:** WATER QUALITY  
**ZONE:** 1D Designated Overnight, 2A Open Space, 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3A Camping, 3B Visitor Base and Lodging, 3C Park Operations and Administration, but it is more practical to establish standards by segment than by zone.  
**STANDARD:** Anti-degradation for each segment, for fecal coliform, nutrients (total nitrogen and total phosphorus), and petroleum hydrocarbons per sampling period.  
Absolute minimum, all segments: State fecal coliform standard for recreational contact at all times.

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**INDICATOR:** OCCUPIED PARKING VERSUS CAPACITY  
**ZONES:** 2A Open Space, 2B Discovery, 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3A Camping, 3B Visitor Base & Lodging, 3C Park Operations & Administration  
**STANDARD:** ***NOTE:** Data collection in 2005 will provide baseline data from which to set appropriate standards of quality for parking capacity.*

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**INDICATOR:** EXTENT/MAGNITUDE OF 4 TRADITIONALLY GATHERED PLANT SPECIES  
**ZONES:** 2B Discovery, 2C Day Use  
**STANDARD:** ***NOTE:** Data collection in 2005 will provide baseline data from which to set appropriate standards of quality for selected traditionally gathered plant species.*

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**INDICATOR:** AVAILABILITY OF DAY USE FACILITIES  
**ZONES:** 2C Day Use, 2D Attraction, 3B Visitor Base & Lodging  
**STANDARD:** Visitors are able to find an open table 70% of the time during peak hours—June through October—at outdoor concession food service areas and park day use picnic areas.

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## For more information

- Review the 2004 Pilot Season, Merced River Monitoring Annual Report
- Consult the *User Capacity Program for the Merced Wild and Scenic River Corridor*.
- Read the VERP fact sheet (available on the park's planning web site at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning)).
- Attend one of the park's monthly Open Houses to learn more about VERP and speak with park staff about the latest monitoring activities. A schedule of open houses can be viewed at [www.nps.gov/yose/planning](http://www.nps.gov/yose/planning).